

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
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AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, IS, JO
SUBJECT: HONEYMOON ON THE WEST BANK--MILGOV O.K.'S MAYOR'S MEETING

REF: JERUSALEM 1597 AND PREVIOUS

SUMMARY: NEW MILGOV CONTINUES SOFT LINE WITH WEST BANK MAYORS, MOST RECENTLY IN TULKARM. AS A NEW DEPARTURE, HE HAS APPROVED AN ANNUAL MEETING OF ALL MAYORS IF THEY DEAL ONLY WITH MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND IF MILGOV OFFICIALS CAN ATTEND. MAYORS OF NABLUS, HEBRON AND TULKARM ARE COORDINATING POLICIES TO RESOLVE LONGSTANDING DISAGREEMENT WITH MILGOV OVER CONTRACTS. END SUMMARY.

1. GENERAL BEN-ELEIZER AND STAFF VISITED TULKARM JUNE 13 TO MEET WITH CITY COUNCIL. IN A NEW DEPARTURE, HE APPROVED, IN PRINCIPLE, ANNUAL MEETINGS OF WEST BANK
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MAYORS TO DISCUSS COMMON PROBLEMS. ACCORDING TO MUNICIPAL SOURCES, THE MILGOV ATTACHED TWO CONDITIONS: FIRST, ONLY MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS BE DISCUSSED AND, SECOND, THAT MILGOV OFFICIALS ATTEND.

2. AS IN HEBRON AND RAMALLAH, BEN-ELIEZER HEARD SYMPATHETICALLY MUNICIPAL REQUESTS AND DECIDED, ACCORDING

TO THE MUNICIPAL SECRETARY, THE FOLLOWING:

(A) TO APPROVE VISITS BY CITY COUNCILMEN TO PRISONERS, SCHOOLS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS,

(B) TO ASSIST IN IMPROVING LOCAL HOSPITALS,

(C) TO FINANCE HALF THE COST OF A NEW GARBAGE TRUCK,

(D) TO STUDY THE POSSIBILITY OF REOPENING HOUSES AND BUSINESSES WHICH HAVE BEEN SEALED AS PUNISHMENT FOR SECURITY OFFENSES,

(E) TO STUDY EASING TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS OF STUDENTS, AND

(F) TO STUDY POSSIBILITY OF INCREASING THE CITY'S REVENUES FROM FUEL TAX AND INCREASING ELECTRICAL RATES.

3. BEN-ELIEZER REJECTED REQUESTS TO EASE SECURITY PROCEDURES AT THE JORDAN RIVER BRIDGES AND TO EASE RESTRICTIONS ON SOCIAL AND CULTURAL MEETINGS.

4. TULKARM'S MAYOR HANNOUN TOLD US THAT IN COORDINATION WITH MAYORS OF NABLUS AND HEBRON, HE WAS ALSO PURSUING WITH BEN-ELIEZER A SOLUTION TO THE LONGSTANDING PROBLEM OF CONTRACTS. THE PALESTINIANS CONTINUE TO REFUSE TO ACKNOWLEDGE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PRIORITY OF HEBREW TEXT AND PROVISION FOR APPEAL TO ISRAELI SUPREME COURT IN JERUSALEM IN CASES OF DISPUTE. THE MILGOV TOLD HANNOUN HE WOULD STUDY HIS RECOMMENDATIONS.

5. COMMENT: PROSPECTS OF AN ANNUAL MAYORS' MEETING RAISE LOTS OF QUESTIONS: WHO CHAIRS IT? WHERE IS IT HELD? WHO PREPARES THE AGENDA? DO WORKING COMMITTEES FORM? ETC. WE WILL HAVE TO CHECK WITH OLD TIMERS, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT, IF HELD, IT WOULD BE THE FIRST OFFICIAL ASSEMBLY OF ELECTED OFFICIALS ON THE WEST BANK SINCE 1967. (WEST BANK REPRESENTATIVES DID, OF COURSE, ATTEND MEETINGS OF JORDANIAN PARLIAMENT IN AMMAN.) GAZA, WHICH IS OUTSIDE OF BEN-ELIEZER'S JURISDICTION, APPARENTLY WOULD NOT BE REPRESENTED.
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